



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT
NOVEMBER 7, 2016**

The Special meeting Questions to Directors of the Common Council of the City of Middletown was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Monday, November 7, 2016 at 6 p.m.

Present

Deputy Mayor Robert P. Santangelo, Council Members Eugene Nocera, Thomas Serra, Mary Bartolotta, Gerald Daley, Carl Chisem, Sebastian Giuliano, Philip Pessina, Deborak Kleckowski, and Linda Salafia; Sergeant-at-arms Officer Haddad; and Common Council Clerk Marie Norwood.

Absent

Mayor Daniel T. Drew, Council Members Robert Blanchard and Grady L. Faulkner, Jr., and Corporation Counsel Daniel B. Ryan.

Also Present

Deputy Public Works Director Christopher Holden, Finance Director Carl Erlacher, Acting Director of IT Eldon Bailey, Deputy Water and Sewer Director Robert Young, General Counsel Brig Smith, Deputy General Counsel Kori Wisneski, Chief of Police William McKenna, Acting Parks and Recreation Acting Director Deb Stanley, Tax Assessor Damon Braasch, Fire Chief Robert Kronenberger, Deputy Fire Chief A. Leary, Director of Communications Wayne Bartolotta, Deputy Director of Planning, Conservation, and Development Bruce Driska, Director of Human Relations Faith Jackson Arts Coordinator Stephan Allison, City and Town Clerk Linda Bettencourt, Emergency Management Director George Dunn, Director of Health Joseph Havlicek, M.D., and six members of the public.

1. Mayor calls meeting to order.

The Acting Chair opens the meeting at 6:01 p.m. and leads the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Acting Chair asks the Clerk to read the call of the meeting; he declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

2. Questions to Directors Opens

The Acting Chair asks if there are any questions to Directors. Councilman Serra asks for the Fire, Police and Public Works Director. He brings them up to 10F regarding Route 9; have you in an official capacity and elected commission what they have planned and do you have input on the document and do you have a plan of action for whatever Route 9, streets, safety impact this will have.

Noted for the Record

Councilwoman Kleckowski takes her seat in the chamber at 6:03 p.m.

Fire Chief Rob Kronenberger states they have had multiple meetings with the Mayor's office and DOT; the second plan looks to be feasible and from the Fire Department stand point, he is comfortable with it as far as the Main Street work and Route 9 work but would like to see more from DOT on the plan once the break ground on Route 9 southbound. I think that one could be an impact. As of right now, they think the flow of traffic into the median area. That is what I have seen so far.

Noted for the Record

Councilwoman Bartolotta takes her seat in the chamber at 6:04 p.m.

Councilman Serra asks has Public Safety had any discussion on this relative to policies the City might have to make relative to that; we have no control over what they do on Route 9. That is a State Road, but the flow onto our streets we have to deal with. Chief Kronenberger states it has not been discussed during the fire portion of that meeting; he is not sure of the PD portion of the meeting. Councilman Serra suggests that they do that so they can deal with the impact. The elected officials should be aware of whatever it is so that whenever they have to react to and to give you what you need to deal with the impact. Same thing to you Chief (McKenna). Chief McKenna states they met a couple of times; once here with the delegates and DOT and once with our internal sources with the traffic division. We have some concerns and expect DOT to supply more information which they have not done so far. If they start closing the portions of the

walk light, the bump outs, we recommended to them, and they have not responded, we recommended they try it first with rubber cones or something that isn't going to damage an 18-wheeler if they are taking a left or right-hand turn at Washington. They claim it will work, but we will suggest they put up some sort of imaginary barrier or a rubber cone type to see if it works because we are not sold on it. I would be willing to talk to the commission about it. Councilman Serra states it is important that the elected officials on the commission should be advising the Council about the impact of this issue. I understand as well that the northern portion of Washington Street up on Main Street is a state road. Chief McKenna responds it is and they gave a pretty good presentation, but it is not to our satisfaction to be honest with you. Councilman Serra states his request we make sure that the Public Safety Commission is aware of whatever you need so they can help deal with the impact of whatever is going to happen, Chief McKenna states he will get it on the agenda.

Noted for the Record

Councilman Daley takes his seat in the chamber at 6:06 p.m.

Councilman Serra asks the Deputy Director of Public Works, Chris Holden what Public Works knows about it. Mr. Holden states they have been to a couple of meetings with DOT and they have taken into consideration some of the comments made at the public hearing and they have shifted the on and off of Route 9 a little farther north, to take more traffic off of Main Street. At this point, we are waiting for more detail in that design. Councilman Serra states the communication to all of you relative to the next plan of action or reaction to what you have said, when will that be. Mr. Holden responds he is not sure they have set another time yet; they were looking to set another public hearing to discuss the new design once they flushed it out and got more details set. I don't believe a date has been set yet. Councilman Serra states with all your action or interaction with them have they made you all aware that they will help us pay for any impact it might have on us. Chief McKenna states no, they haven't; the example they used which is pretty convincing was right at the Grand Street intersection, where they bumped out right in front of Eli Cannon's? So, that's working, but we asked them for more documentation and more proof, the ADA compliant time, the countdown for the walk cycle. Maybe we should bring it up at the Commission, but I am not satisfied. Councilman Serra states that is his request; that the commissioners, the elected officials only on the impact or whatever they are doing on Route 9, the impact on us, you are all satisfied and can deal with it. Chief McKenna states the presentation was well done and they are confident that it will work and we asked for more, but he hasn't received it. We can contact DOT to provide more documentation. Councilman Serra states the effect on medical services was there anything on that. Chief McKenna states they haven't heard anything and can speak to it. Councilman Serra asks that the elected officials are kept aware and involved so that whatever comes up they can give you what you need to deal with the impact.

Councilman Giuliano asks in discussion of the bump-outs, he had a discussion with DOT officials on the Grand Street bump out and what they are planning at Washington Street is much more drastic. The Grand Street bump-out is so long, it looks like a wider sidewalk. How will it behave the same way? Chief McKenna agrees and they use it as the prime example. They told us to imagine what it is like there at Grand Street, but it will be done on both sides at Washington Street; they will do the same at Vision Corner and Luce and they claim by doing the bump-out, they can cut down the amount of seconds that it can take one to walk across the street, in shorter cycles and it should keep traffic moving. Not convinced quite yet. We want more drawings and Michael Mullane gave him a suggestion why don't we suggest putting up the cones that can be knocked down or a concrete barrier and see how that works first. We are still waiting to hear from them. Councilman Giuliano states DOT wants to take Main Street, Washington Street north and turn it into an on/off ramp for the bridge. That is DOT solving Route 9 problem and dumping the problem in our lap. That is completely inconsistent with our plans for the revitalization of the north end. Chief McKenna states traveling north and taking a right on Hartford Avenue, according to their plan there will no longer be any light at Hartford Avenue at Route 9 north and thus the backup which would have happened on Main Street at the congested areas at the bump outs, they would only stop at the bridge at St. John's Square for people coming from Portland coming on to Hartford Avenue. Once they go ahead, if we are travelling north on Main Street and taking a right on Hartford Avenue, there will no longer be a light at the intersection of route 9 and they are claiming as a result there will be less backup or anticipated backup at the congested areas of Main Street. We asked for more, but they haven't provided it. Councilman Giuliano states the congestion on Main Street is due to an incident on the bridge. I've rarely seen massive congestion with people trying to get on Route 9 north. Chief McKenna states they brought up the Chamber's concern and the merchant's concerns regarding the parking on Main Street if there is all this congestion. How can they back up to get out of there? The Route 9 portion sounds wonderful, but City streets are questionable. Anything that solves the State problem but leads to problems in Middletown is not the way to go. Councilman Giuliano states we should see the plan on 17th; any plan that solves the State's problem by handing a problem to Middletown that we didn't have before, can't be an attractive solution for us. Chief states to be honest he would like to do some studies beforehand. We can bring this to the commission and round table a few things there.

Councilman Daley states happens to know because the Mayor's office reached out to me about scheduling the meeting at the Elk's on the 17th and DOT has pushed it out and is cancelled for the 17th but is looking at the first and second week in December. I don't agree with Councilman

Giuliano that the State is trying to dump the problem on Middletown's local Streets. They are trying to listen to all comments and be as responsive as they can. It is a problem. It may have other consequences and one of the reasons it has been pushed out is they are reassessing the bump-outs at Washington Street. They have had discussion of coordinating the signals on Washington and Main Streets to alleviate some of those problems. They have heard the objections to the elevation of the highway and what that does to the visual access to the river and they are trying to respond to that. I think we need to give them a fair opportunity to come back and respond. They have done a lot of traffic studies.

Councilman Nocera calls up Robert Young, Acting Director of Water and Sewer. He asks with regard to item 12G, if you could review the plan for \$500,000 transfer of various CNR line items for new items you need to work on in the future for the City. Mr. Young states the amount of the CNR is consistent with the amount in the budget adopted and is funded with the depreciation line item. He goes through the plan for Councilman Nocera which includes ten items.

Noted for the Record

Councilman Pessina takes his seat in the chamber at 6:20 p.m.

Councilman Nocera asks if there is a priority list. Mr. Young responds yes, we ask the managers of those sections to make a list and then prioritize based on available dollars. Usually the available dollars don't always match what the various areas want. We take the highest priorities and fund it. There is a list of transfers; these line items basically reoccur every year and we like to pool what is left in each line item and bring those to the current year. Councilman Nocera asks if you are in good shape. Mr. Young states they would always like more, but this does it. This starts it and keeps us going.

Councilman Giuliano asks for Chairman of Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools and asks that they come up. The Director of Facilities is also present and comes forward. Councilman Giuliano is asking about 9C, the \$25,000 for a feasibility study; Mr. Chairman you were at the Finance and Government meeting and I am totally confused on what the purpose of this is. If this is for the Hunting Hill Avenue site, I am for it. But if this is going beyond what a building committee should be doing, then I'm still a little troubled by it. Mr. Loffredo states as you are aware this has been an ongoing issue for a couple of years in terms doing something with the potential of 6, 7 and 8 and the Kiegwin and Woodrow Wilson Middle School which is why there is a committee. With the committee in place, a meeting was arranged with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to discuss procedures for the potential request for construction grant proposal to the State for a new or renovated facility on the Hunting Hill Avenue site. There was a joint meeting with the Board of Education and the Building Committee and they reviewed the information and the requested information the State had talked about and the Board reconfirmed between the Board and the Committee that the Board was committed to building or renovating at that site to accommodate 6th, 7th and 8th grades. We have the Director of Facilities, John Cross here; he was at the meeting as well and is experienced being the former Director of Facilities in Waterbury. He has been involved with the construction and renovation of many, many buildings over the years. At the meeting they also indicated in addition to submitting a grant proposal and emphasized to the City it would be to their benefit if they could get their proposal of the Hunting Hill site to us prior to June, 2017, you would fall under the current guidelines for school construction and reimbursement. They also said it would be to the City's interest and recommend that you do so, is to present some information about what Middletown's overall general vision was for all schools. I was at the Finance and Government meeting attempting to state the Board of Education for the past several years, we have spent a lot of money looking at our K-5 system. We also looked at 8,7,6 reconfiguration and we also looked at putting 6th grade into the elementary schools; after that review, the Board would not recommend doing that. We confirmed that with the building committee as well. I was indicating to Finance and Government that we have done a redistricting study and closure study at the elementary level and in the process of doing those studies, we have generated a variety of reports. We have engaged in the process with Milone & MacBroom. They have analyzed our elementary schools and we have spent a substantial amount of money already. He didn't want a study again. I wanted to indicate, this was a request - there are requirements that have to be met when filling out the application; they are clear and explicit and they advise us to do that this year if we can, and it would help them if they got more information about what is happening in the city. John Cross states the State wants to know what is going on and what we will be doing in the future; we have the studies done but they need to be organized and presented in a fashion while putting your submission together. These grants are put in order as received and whoever has the best package presented is likely to find their way to the top of the process. While submitting it, submitting all the information we have, that the information is comprehensive and understand what is going on so we look like we know what we are doing and are ready to move forward. It is very important to present the information correctly and informatively and it should not be a large cost. If the project is accepted, the architectural engineering fees are reimbursed. Councilman Giuliano states I just want to make sure we are all doing what we are supposed to do by the law and not crossing over into each other's areas of responsibility. Mr. Loffredo states if we had to review all of our elementary schools and then do the architectural study, we could not do it for \$25,000. Councilman Giuliano what you have done, is it enough to present to the State. Dr. Charles states she is not sure they have all the information, but they do have a huge portion of this will be factored in and would not have to be repeated; we need to say we have a plan for our elementary schools and the focus is on 6, 7 and 8 Middle School. Councilman Giuliano states

that is the Board's decision. Mr. Loffredo states the State requires the adoption of various resolutions by the Council. Once the work is done for the project, it would be the additional resolution that you confirm this plan and agree to it. We are trying to fall within the current reimbursement rates. The rates might change in the future. I take full blame for not presenting my concerns in a positive way. Councilman Giuliano states you have satisfied me; I just wanted to make sure we are going down the right road here.

Councilwoman Bartolotta is here as a Council member and Chair of the building committee. The combined meeting was the final consensus of everyone being on board with what was being presented. The reason for that was when we met with DAS we were told they wanted an overall look of the entire city and to clarify, we can use the material that you have already done, but we are hiring professionals to put this information together for the DAS and that is the intent of this tonight, is that correct. Dr. Charles yes. Councilwoman Bartolotta states to the Chair of the BOE, I appreciate your comments this evening. Councilman Nocera states it is his experience that the State and City and Board of Education does not want to enter into this project with blinders on. They do expect to look holistically, perhaps to put in the preface of the report so that the State knows that they have looked at other needs, but this is where this is going. Mr. Loffredo states many calls have been made and the State provided the committee and board what this extra they are looking for is. We want to be in compliance with what they requested. Councilman Serra asks for the City Attorney and Finance Director; General Counsel Smith and Mr. Erlacher come forward. Councilman Serra asks about DATTCO and if it is okay and the \$336,000 and it is going into the general fund. General Counsel Smith responds yes. Councilman Serra states the second is Kleen Energy. The five year agreement, what were we getting with the agreement that was in place for the general fund. General Counsel Smith responds with the current agreement the general fund was not getting anything. Councilman Serra states with the new one, \$275,000 is coming into the general fund each year and a 2.5% increase each year and the Water and Sewer is getting \$25,000 a year to do maintenance. General Counsel Smith replies correct, with the same 2.5% escalator. Councilman Serra states the Fire contract. Deputy General Counsel Kori Wisneski comes forward. Councilman Serra states you did a great job at Finance and Government, but he wants everyone to know what you have done. He reads the changes from the contract. He thinks it is great things you did. CPI in terms of his understanding, they were taking that so the raise is nice. I think the City is fair relative to labor. It is unfortunate that we were remiss and gives credit to former Mayor Giuliano who took the blame on this. It would be remiss not to address the compensatory time change that would really rack the district for the \$270,000. For me to see this and hope all your savings and you stand behind them because 1/10th of a mill is \$121,600 in the Fire District and if we don't have those savings, it will mean 1/2 mill increase in the district. If we have the savings it is 2/10th's of a mill if everything stays flat. Looking at this, you did a great job. It is fair and with the increase over the years, I think it is fair as well. So that the Fire District is aware that potentially there is a savings. He asks Mr. Erlacher if he agrees with this. Mr. Erlacher states he agrees with the cost that I gave you and the sum of the savings, you would have to check with the Chief because some of those are removals of certain stipends. Councilman Serra asked if he has checked them. Mr. Erlacher replies I spoke to him about and as long as he stands by the schedule that he set, then yes, there will be a savings. Councilman Serra states the potential is a 5/10ths increase each year or 2/10ths for the district and he will be supporting this. He hopes the savings will be there. Kudos for the negotiations.

Councilman Giuliano compliments MS Wisneski as well on this. He states the Council's only role in this is whether they will fund the agreement or not. Any working agreements are under the executive branch and in terms of the economic impact that is our responsibility. When you present us with something that is revenue neutral, I don't see how we can do anything but approve it. I am assuming the Fire Chief is confident in the savings and the Finance Director is confident with the costs and that is all we can do about it. He thanks Kori.

3. Questions to Directors Closes.

The Acting Chair asks if there are any other questions to directors; seeing none, he asks for a motion to adjourn.

4. Meeting adjourned.

Councilman Thomas J. Serra reads and moves for approval adjourning the meeting. Councilman Sebastian N. Giuliano seconds the motion. The chair calls for the vote. It is 11 aye votes by Councilman Eugene Nocera, Councilman Thomas J. Serra, Councilwoman Mary A. Bartolotta, Councilman Gerald E. Daley, Councilman Robert P. Santangelo, Councilman Carl R. Chisem, Councilman Robert Blanchard, Councilman Sebastian N. Giuliano, Councilman Philip Pessina, Councilwoman Deborah A. Kleckowski, Councilwoman Linda Salafia; 0 nay votes by no one and 1 absent by Councilman Grady L. Faulkner, Jr.. The Chair states the matter carried with 11 affirmative votes, 0 in opposition and 1 absent.

ATTEST:

MARIE O. NORWOOD
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK